

Advent Devotions 2022

Week Two

My Soul Magnifies the Lord



Mary's encounter with the angel Gabriel and her song when she is with her cousin Elizabeth echo a divine leitmotif with how God acts in the world. Her song, often called the Magnificat, is a song of protest and hope. It is a song that describes what God is up to in the world. God's promises are about to come to fruition; the Messiah is coming! And the way in which God does this work is through upending our world, turning things upside down, all done to turn it right side up. And Mary herself is the catalyst for the reversals in our gospel passages today.

Think about Mary for just a moment. She stands in stark contrast to our standards of who might be chosen to birth Jesus into the world, yet it is her that God picked. Mary was not from a family of any economic status of note. She was likely a peasant from a small village in a militarily occupied country. Can you imagine how people in her town may have viewed her? Her friends and neighbors would have likely looked upon her with disgrace because she was unmarried and pregnant.

Mary is a reversal of how we might expect God to work in the world. We would likely think that Jesus, who is the Messiah after all, would be born to a family of some regard so to make some impact in the world—perhaps from a priestly family, or a family involved in politics, or better yet a family of financial status. But that we know that is not the case. It is Mary herself who we see in a long line of divine surprises of how God acts in our world.

And Mary knows it. She knows the tradition in which she stands. She knows that throughout the story of her people and her faith, God has used unlikely people and modes to change the world. Mary stands in awe of what God is up to through her, and she sings about it with her cousin Elizabeth who herself has a miraculous birth story to tell and whose son will be integral in Jesus' ministry on earth. May we witness the divine in new and surprising ways this Advent season!